

Message Text

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ORIGIN AF-08

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 SS-15 USIA-06 CU-02 NSC-05
/050 R

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APPROVED BY AF:WESCHAUFEELE
IO/UNP:JTEFFT
S/S:S GOLDSMITH
DESIRED DISTRIBUTION
USIA, CU/AF

-----311015Z 055438 /22
R 300255Z MAR 77
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY LAGOS
INFO USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 070321

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, NI

SUBJECT: LETTER FROM OBASANJO TO PRESIDENT CARTER

REF: STATE 023069

1. NIGERIAN EMBASSY DELIVERED TO DEPARTMENT MARCH 22
LETTER FROM HEAD OF STATE OBASANJO TO THE PRESIDENT UNDER
COVER OF DIPLOMATIC NOTE WHICH READ AS FOLLOWS:

2. QUOTE (COMPLIMENTARY OPENING), AND HAS THE HONOUR TO
TRANSMIT HERewith UNDER SEALED COVER A MESSAGE ADDRESSED
TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, BY HIS
EXCELLENCY, LT. GENERAL OLUSEGUN OBASANJO, HEAD OF THE
FEDERAL MILITARY GOVERNMENT, COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF THE
NIGERIAN ARMED FORCES, IN REPLY TO THE LETTER DATED
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JANUARY 31, 1977 DELIVERED BY AMBASSADOR ANDREW YOUNG
DURING HIS RECENT VISIT TO NIGERIA.

3. QUOTE THE AMBASSADOR OF NIGERIA WOULD BE MOST GRATEFUL
IF THE SECRETARY OF STATE WOULD ARRANGE FOR THIS MESSAGE TO
BE TRANSMITTED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF
AMERICA.

3. QUOTE THE AMBASSADOR OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF

NIGERIA WISHES TO AVAIL HIMSELF OF THIS OPPORTUNITY TO CONVEY TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE THE ASSURANCES OF HIS HIGHEST CONSIDERATION. END QUOTE.

4. THE LETTER, DATED FEBRUARY 17, READS AS FOLLOWS:

5. QUOTE MY DEAR PRESIDENT CARTER, I THANK YOU FOR YOUR LETTER OF 31ST JANUARY, 1977 WHICH WAS DELIVERED TO ME BY AMBASSADOR ANDREW YOUNG DURING HIS RECENT VISIT TO NIGERIA. MY COLLEAGUES AND I WERE PLEASED TO RECEIVE MR. YOUNG AND TO HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY OF A MOST FRUITFUL EXCHANGE OF VIEWS WITH HIM ON IMPORTANT MATTERS OF INTEREST TO OUR TWO COUNTRIES SO SOON AFTER THE ASSUMPTION OF OFFICE BY YOUR ADMINISTRATION.

6. QUOTE IT HAS ALWAYS BEEN MY BELIEF AND CONVICTION THAT GOOD RELATIONS BETWEEN NIGERIA AND THE USA ARE OF UTMOST IMPORTANCE AND THAT OUR TWO COUNTRIES CAN WORK TOGETHER IN FINDING SOLUTIONS TO A NUMBER OF WORLD PROBLEMS. I WAS THEREFORE, GRATIFIED THAT BOTH SECRETARY OF STATE, CYRUS VANCE, IN HIS LETTER DATED 29TH JANUARY, 1977 AND AMBASSADOR YOUNG, DURING OUR DISCUSSIONS IN LAGOS LAST WEEK, CONFIRMED THE DESIRE OF YOUR GOVERNMENT TO CONSULT WITH US ON FUTURE STEPS WHICH YOU MIGHT TAKE, AND WAYS IN WHICH OUR TWO GOVERNMENTS COULD CO-OPERATE, TO ACHIEVE A SETTLEMENT OF SOUTHERN AFRICA'S HIGHLY EXPLOSIVE SITUATION.

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7. QUOTE AMBASSADOR YOUNG WOULD HAVE BRIEFED YOU IN DETAIL ON OUR DISCUSSIONS, WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO SOUTHERN AFRICA. I BELIEVE THAT OUR IMMEDIATE OBJECTIVE MUST BE THE EARLY REACTIVATION OF THE DEADLOCK GENEVA CONFERENCE ON ZIMBABWE AND MY COMMISSIONER FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS, BRIGADIER JOSEPH GARBA, WILL REMAIN IN CONTACT WITH SECRETARY OF STATE VANCE AND AMBASSADOR YOUNG ON THIS AND OTHER MATTERS. THIS SHOULD BE BACKED UP BY SUFFICIENT FORCE BY THE LIBERATION FIGHTERS INSIDE ZIMBABWE TO BRING ABOUT GENUINE SPIRIT OF NEGOTIATION AND ACCOMMODATION IN THE WHITE SETTLERS OF ZIMBABWE. I ALSO HOPE THAT, HAVING RIGHTLY DENOUNCED ANY SO-CALLED INTERNAL SOLUTIONS FOR NAMIBIA, OUR TWO GOVERNMENTS WOULD NOW WORK TOGETHER FOR THE REJECTION BY THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY OF THE ILLEGAL CONSTITUTIONAL AGREEMENT WHICH WAS ALLEGEDLY REACHED RECENTLY AT WINDHOEK BETWEEN THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT AND CERTAIN ELEMENTS IN NAMIBIA AND WHICH I UNDERSTAND THE VORSTER REGIME INTENDS TO INTRODUCE IN APRIL, 1977.

8. QUOTE WE IN NIGERIA EXPECT THAT A NEW CHAPTER WILL BE OPENED IN THE RELATIONS BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES AND AMBASSADOR YOUNG WILL CONFIRM TO YOU OUR DETERMINATION TO

MAINTAIN THE MOMENTUM GENERATED BY AFRICAN CONFIDENCE IN THE PRESENT AMERICAN ADMINISTRATION BASED ON A CAREFUL ANALYSIS OF THE PAST RECORD AND PRONOUNCEMENTS OF ITS LEADERSHIP. IT IS MY HOPE THEREFORE THAT THE CONFIDENCE WILL BE JUSTIFIED BY THE ACTIONS OF YOUR GOVERNMENT IN SOUTHERN AFRICA IN THE WEEKS IMMEDIATELY AHEAD.

9. QUOTE I SHOULD LIKE TO TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO EXPRESS TO YOUR GOVERNMENT OUR DEEP APPRECIATION FOR ITS ASSISTANCE TO THOSE DISTINGUISHED CITIZENS OF AFRICAN ORIGIN FROM YOUR GREAT COUNTRY WHO PARTICIPATED IN THE SECOND WORLD BLACK AND AFRICAN FESTIVAL OF ARTS AND CULTURE. I CAN ASSURE YOU THAT THEY MADE AN INVALUABLE CONTRIBUTION TO THE SUCCESS OF THAT HISTORIC RE-UNION OF BLACK AND AFRICAN PEOPLES AND WERE IN ALL RESPECTS WORTHY AMBASSADORS OF THEIR COUNTRY.

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10. QUOTE PLEASE ACCEPT, MR. PRESIDENT, THE EXPRESSION OF MY HIGHEST ESTEEM. YOURS MOST SINCERELY, (LT.-GENERAL OLUSEGUN OBASANJO) HEAD OF THE FEDERAL MILITARY GOVERNMENT, COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF THE ARMED FORCES OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA. END QUOTE.

11. THE LETTER IS BEING TRANSMITTED TO THE WHITE HOUSE. THE DEPARTMENT HAS RECOMMENDED THAT NO REPLY IS NECESSARY.

12. A COPY OF THE LETTER WILL BE POUCHED TO THE EMBASSY.

CHRISTOPHER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: TEXT, POLITICAL SETTLEMENT, DIPLOMATIC COMMUNICATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 30-Mar-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977STATE070321
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: SFPATRICK/MPH
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770110-0495
Format: TEL
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t1977036/aaaaaeql.tel
Line Count: 157
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 3d2ff8b7-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ORIGIN AF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 STATE 23069
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 03-Feb-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3107836
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: LETTER FROM OBASANJO TO PRESIDENT CARTER
TAGS: PFOR, PPDC, NI, WA, SF, XY, (CARTER, JIMMY), (OBASANJO, OLUSEGUN)
To: LAGOS
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/3d2ff8b7-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009